

Strawberries

School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme



Your delivery

- **Each pack contains:** 400g of berries. A punnet will provide 2 to 3 berries for each 10 children.
- **Number of pieces per pupil:** 2 to 3 depending on size
- **Storage:** Best kept refrigerated. Otherwise store somewhere cool, dry, away from direct sunlight and chemicals, and ideally off the ground
- **Preparation:** Fruit is very sensitive so rinse gently

What to expect

Strawberries should be fully red in colour with a bright green calyx (stalk). They should be clean and dry. As the berries have been picked and put directly in the punnet in the field, there may be some straw or plant debris in it. However, this will be minimal. Green fruit should be rejected as this indicates that they are not ripe.

Strawberries provided by the scheme should be eaten on the same day of delivery (or the next) for best flavour and freshness.

Place of origin

Strawberries have been cultivated for the last 700 years. Wild strawberries were discovered in Virginia, USA, by the first European explorers. Strawberries are now grown all over the world, in countries with a temperate climate. America and Spain are the biggest strawberry producing countries, although other important production areas are Holland, Belgium, Israel and Egypt.

Within the UK the main production areas are Kent, Hertfordshire, Staffordshire, East Anglia and Perthshire in Scotland. The main varieties are Elsanta and Sonata.

Nutritional information

- ✓ High in vitamin C
- ✓ All fruit and vegetables are low in sodium, calories and fat and are a good source of dietary

Simple recipe

For a simple but delicious dessert, finely chop a handful of strawberries and add them to natural yoghurt.

Strawberries



How strawberries are grown

- Strawberry plants are small with a crown of dark green leaves. All plants produce runners (long stems) which send down roots when they touch the ground and a new plant develops. However, for fruit production these runners are removed so that all the energy goes into the production of the flowers then the fruit.
- Strawberry plants are planted in either the autumn or the spring.
- Strawberry plants produce white flowers in late spring/early summer. These are pollinated by bees and then produce berries. Flowering usually last about three to four weeks.
- After the flowers bloom, it usually takes about four to six weeks before the strawberries are ripe.
- Strawberries are hand picked because they ripen at different times and because they are delicate and easily bruised. Each plant is picked every two or three days during the four to six week cropping period.
- British strawberries are produced from April until November. Early and late production is from under glasshouses. For the remainder of the season strawberries are grown outdoors, often protected by tunnels.
- Within one hour of picking, strawberries are then taken to cooling facilities where they are rapidly cooled to 5°C to 8°C. They are kept at this temperature all the way to the shops.
- This highly perishable fruit must be kept chilled to be in the best condition for the anticipated three to five day shelf life.

Tips for storing, handling and eating strawberries at home

- Strawberries should be stored in a cool place, preferably in a refrigerator
- They should be washed just before use and are best if allowed to reach room temperature before serving. The calyx (stalk) can be removed before serving, or they can be used as a convenient way to hold the fruit while eating it.
- Strawberries are normally eaten raw, served alone as a snack or light dessert or added to fruit salads, breakfast cereals, cheese and fruit platters, sorbets, ice cream, cakes or tarts. They can also be added to stewed fruits, made into jam or blended into smoothies.

Interesting fact

- Strawberries are not actually a berry but a member of the rose family. The real fruits are the tiny yellow seeds on the outside of the strawberry, each one surrounded by red flesh.
- There are exactly 200 tiny seeds (fruits) on every strawberry.
- Strawberries are associated with love, being heart shaped, popular around valentine's Day and claim to boost male fertility.

For more information

www.nhs.uk/5aday, www.nhs.uk/change4life, www.food.gov.uk, www.nhs.uk/healthyeating and www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk